

**SGI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
FOR THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS
SGI-USA HAS DEVELOPED BECAUSE OF YOU**

My sincerest congratulations on the holding of your spirited and dynamic activity, aimed at the creation of a new era. I have heard that today you are commemorating the 40th anniversary of global kosen-rufu.

SGI-USA has developed because of your tenacious and dedicated struggles, day and night. For this, I thank you.

In particular, I want to express my deepest respect to those of you who pioneered our movement in America. Thank you for all of your hard work over the years.

Forty years have passed since my first visit to the United States, and today my beloved friends of SGI-USA are working together toward a new era of humanity. You have been making wonderful progress based on beautiful human harmony, centering on your general director, Danny Nagashima, and your women's leader, Matilda Buck, both of whom I trust so dearly.

What makes me the happiest is to witness the excellent growth and development of the youth who shoulder the responsibility for the new era. A new era requires a new door, a new means of entry. It is always the passion of youth that opens that door—the actions of youth who uphold a just philosophy and live without compromise for a high ideal.

I therefore ask that you, the young successors to kosen-rufu, please carry on with the same faith and fighting spirit as the pioneers of SGI-USA, firmly receiving the baton in the race into the 21st century, while advancing with dignity and the heart of a lion king.

The vigor of youth lies in continuing to grow while maintaining a fresh determination and brimming with a seeking spirit. Real satisfaction in life lies in maintaining the flame of youthful passion and hope in your heart, no matter how old you are. Hope is born of the courage and enthusiasm that does not shrink from real effort and hard work.

No matter how painful or difficult your situation, you need never put yourself down. You need not dwell on how you were in the past. Nichiren Daishonin says, “No matter what may happen, never slacken in the least” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1090). This means to live right now with all of your strength and energy. Please be confident that our way of life lies in looking toward tomorrow, embracing boundless hope within, and advancing ever forward.

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism teaches, “‘Joy’ refers to the wisdom and compassion shared among self and others” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 761). True happiness and joy exist when each person's life shines with wisdom, when he or she lives a life of fulfillment, possessing love and compassion for others while contributing positively to society. Please work together in friendship and high spirits to show proof of this principle.

I am praying from the depths of my heart that your gathering today will be most enjoyable, lively and significant. Please relay my best wishes and regards to all those who could not attend today.